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RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN  
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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0362  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0414  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000634

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: AFRICOM COMMANDER VISITS MOZAMBIQUE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a May 14-15 visit to Mozambique, General William "Kip" Ward, Commander of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), met with President Armando Guebuza, Minister of Defense Filipe Nhussi and other military officials, as well as members of the diplomatic community, to discuss Mozambique's strategic importance to regional security and opportunities for mutual assistance and cooperation. General Ward engaged members of civil society, including journalists, scholars, diplomats, students and the general public, to address AFRICOM's intentions in southern Africa. END SUMMARY.

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MOZAMBIQUE'S PKO POTENTIAL  
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¶2. (C) General Ward discussed Mozambique's commitment to multi-national peacekeeping operations with Minister of Defense Nhussi and senior members of his staff. The Minister reiterated Mozambique's desire to participate in peacekeeping operations, but also voiced concerns as to whether his forces had all of the necessary equipment. General Ward acknowledged the military's progress toward modernizing its infrastructure, equipment and training and expressed particular interest in supporting efforts to improve maritime safety and security as a means of addressing the emerging threat of narco-trafficking. Minister Nhussi said that the GRM had not responded yet to a formal offer to participate in Exercise Shared Accord but that a formal response would soon be provided by diplomatic note.

¶3. (C) During his meeting with President Guebuza, General Ward noted the significance of multiple facets of the countries, bilateral relationship. The President reiterated the government's interest in participating in multi-national peacekeeping operations, emphasizing the opportunities such participation will afford the military to gain operational experience and to demonstrate leadership to the region. He echoed, however, Minister Nhussi's concerns about resource limitations and possible difficulties adequately training and equipping the armed forces. General Ward duly acknowledged these challenges, but encouraged the government to identify a specific mission as the next step to participation. Additionally, the Commander noted the potentially corrosive effects to good governance caused by illegal activities, particularly narcotics trafficking, occurring in ungoverned spaces. The President conceded this was an emerging issue and a reason to upgrade capacity.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH ON AFRICA COMMAND  
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¶4. (SBU) After first participating in a brief press conference with 15 journalists, General Ward addressed a group of more than 250 journalists, scholars, diplomats,

government officials, soldiers and students at Mozambique's first private university, the Universidade Politecnica. Afterwards, he fielded questions for about 45 minutes during which he reiterated that the USG has no intention to establish a military base in Mozambique or control Africa's resources. He directed the audience's attention to the potential benefits of greater military-to-military engagement, particularly given AFRICOM's focus on humanitarian issues.

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POSITIVE PRESS RESPONSE  
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15. (SBU) Print, radio, and television sources followed the General's visit, including a story on the national news wire service, AIM. Press reports were consistently positive. Headlines included: "In Support of Strong African Nations" and "U.S. African Commander Will Support Maritime Security." The visit was featured during primetime news coverage on national television and the event was well covered by private and public news channels, including STV, TIM, as well as the Portugal-based TV station RTP. National Radio Mozambique ran news briefs throughout the day.

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KEY PARTNER MEETING  
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16. (C) General Ward hosted a roundtable with Ambassadors and Defense Attaches from the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal, Norway, South Africa, and Brazil. The

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General summarized AFRICOM's goals for cooperation on the continent and highlighted the significance of maritime security in South and East Africa. He reiterated USG support for Mozambique's participation in peacekeeping operations, in coastal surveillance systems (Automated Information System-AIS), and the Africa Partnership Station (APS). Afterwards, the Charge encouraged attendees to discuss their efforts in PKO and toward improving security in the maritime domain. This discussion raised potential trilateral opportunities with Brazil, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Netherlands on PKO, and with Norway, South Africa and Portugal on maritime and border security. The event was well-received and created prospects for increased cooperation. Attendees also called for future discussions to facilitate and synchronize multinational efforts.

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DINNER WITH INFLUENTIAL MOZAMBICANS  
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17. (C) General Ward participated in an unusually open and frank conversation with several of the most influential figures in Mozambican media. Participants included: Gustavo Mavie, Director of Mozambique's wire service; Salomao Moiane, Editor-in-Chief of an independent weekly; and Fernando Lima, Chairman of the Board of a leading media company. The lively give-and-take extended well beyond its scheduled conclusion. The General noted that he had rarely witnessed such a forthright and open discussion of governance issues, including challenges to the Mozambican political system posed by narcotics and corruption.

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COMMENT: GREATER POLITICAL WILL ON MIL-MIL ISSUES  
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18. (C) General Ward, the most senior U.S. military officer ever to visit Mozambique, reinforced the USG's support of improved maritime domain capability and Mozambique's participation in PKO, paving the way for greater bilateral, and potentially trilateral, cooperation. Public perception of the threats that narco-trafficking and corruption pose to

good governance in Mozambique appears to have increased such that Mozambique may become a more willing partner in joint maritime security efforts. Finally, continued public outreach efforts by AFRICOM visitors appear to have dispelled many of the misconceptions regarding AFRICOM, thus preparing the way for further avenues of bilateral engagement.

Chapman